

# From the Upper Chamber



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## Report for Tuesday, February 19, 2008

The nineteenth day of the 2008 legislative session was called to order by Lieutenant Governor **Casey Cagle**.

Senator **Preston Smith** of the 52<sup>nd</sup> stated that the journal had been read and was found to be correct.

Senate Bills 469-478, Senate Resolution 965 and House Bills 950, 951, 961, 969, 1055, 1105, 1111, 1162, 1164, 1166 and 1167 were read for the first time and assigned to committees. The clerk then read the reports of standing committees and second readers.

Lt. Gov. **Cagle** then welcomed Waffle House CEO **Joe Rogers** to the rostrum to greet the Senate.

After the morning roll call, Lt. Gov. **Cagle** led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then introduced the *Chaplain of the Day*, Dr. **Rusty Newman** of the First Baptist Church in Snellville, who led the Senate in the daily devotional.

Majority Leader **Tommie Williams** of the 19<sup>th</sup> took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to discuss the recent decision by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce to oppose legislation allowing the Cancer Treatment Centers of America to do business in Georgia.

Sen. **Seth Harp** of the 29<sup>th</sup> took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to also discuss issues in the debate on SB 433 and the Certificate of Need (CON) debate.

Sen. **Don Balfour** of the 9<sup>th</sup> took the well to express his views on the CON debate.

Sen. **Vincent Fort** of the 39<sup>th</sup> took the well to honor the memory of Reverend **James Orange**, famed civil rights leader, who passed away over the weekend.

Sen. **John Wiles** of the 37<sup>th</sup> took the rostrum to introduce the *Doctor of the Day*, Dr. **Mitzy Reubin** of Sandy Springs.

Sen. **Ron Ramsey** of the 43<sup>rd</sup> took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to congratulate the DeKalb County Chapter of the NAACP on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He also welcomed members of the group who were seated in the Senate gallery.

The clerk read SR 759, which commends Officer **Jeff Reed** of the Marietta Police Department on being awarded the Medal of Meritorious Service. Sen. **Jack Murphy** of the 27<sup>th</sup> introduced Officer **Reed** to the Senate, and thanked him for his service to the city.

The clerk then read SR 758, which recognizes Captain **Kelly McLendon** of the Polk County Sheriff's Office for his service in the line of duty. Last year, Captain **McClendon** rescued two of his colleagues when their helicopter crashed in Polk County. Sen. **Murphy** introduced Captain **McClendon** to the Senate.

The Senate Consent Calendar for Privileged Resolutions, consisting of SR 922-964, was adopted by a unanimous vote.

The Senate Local Consent Calendar, consisting of SB 462 and 467, and HB 944, 1033 and 1038, was adopted by a vote of 50 to 0.

The clerk read SB 435, which will officially change the name of the Department of Adult Technical Education to the Technical College System of Georgia. Sen. **Harp** took the well to explain the bill.

SB 435 passed by a vote of 51 to 0.

SR 817 was read. The legislation recognizes and commends the Future Farmers of America (FFA) in Georgia. Sen. **John Bulloch** of the 11<sup>th</sup> took the rostrum to introduce several FFA leaders to the Senate.

The clerk read SB 181, which provides for the imposition of certain fees by rental car companies to recover costs. Sen. **Joseph Carter** of the 13<sup>th</sup> took the well to explain the Committee Substitute.

Amendment 1 was read. The Amendment would add language to the bill to require rental car companies to include all fees in its quoted daily rates.

Sen. **Steve Thompson** of the 33<sup>rd</sup> took the well to explain his Amendment. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Wiles**.

Sen. **Carter** took the well to conclude the debate on SB 181. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Smith**.

Sen. **Thompson** of the 33<sup>rd</sup> took the well to again speak in support of his Amendment.

The clerk read SR 851, which congratulates the Buford High School Football team for winning its fourth state title in seven years. Sen. **Renee Unterman** of the 45<sup>th</sup> took the rostrum to introduce the team to the Senate.

The clerk read Amendment 1a, which makes another minor change to the legislation. Sen. **Smith** took the well to explain his Amendment, stating that Senators **Thompson** of the 33<sup>rd</sup> and **Carter** both support the Amendment.

Amendment 1a was adopted unanimously.

Amendment 1 was adopted as amended by a unanimous vote.

The Committee Substitute to SB 181 was adopted unanimously as amended.

SB 181 passed by substitute by a vote of 47 to 2.

The clerk read SB 361, which is known as the *Georgia Consumer Protection Act*. The bill would allow consumers to place a freeze on their credit through the major credit reporting agencies.

Sen. **Chip Rogers** of the 21<sup>st</sup> took the well to explain his legislation and his Amendments 1 and 1a. He yielded to questions from Sens. **Emanuel Jones** of the 10<sup>th</sup>, **Mitch Seabaugh** of the 28<sup>th</sup> and **Ralph Hudgens** of the 47<sup>th</sup>.

Sen. **Bill Hamrick** of the 30<sup>th</sup> took the well to speak in favor of the bill.

Sen. **Unterman** took the well to speak against Amendments 1 and 1a.

Sen. **Unterman** asked for a role call vote on Amendment 1a.

Amendment 1a was adopted by a vote of 37 to 11.

Amendment 1 was adopted unanimously as amended. The measure would allow credit reporting agencies to charge a reasonable fee for a consumer to place a credit freeze.

Amendment 1b by Sen. **Jones** was lost by a vote of 21 to 27. The Amendment would have returned the fee amount to place a credit freeze to \$3.

Amendment 2, which sets forth language on the removal of credit freezes, was adopted unanimously.

The Committee Substitute to SB 361 was unanimously adopted as amended.

SB 361 passed by substitute by a vote of 45 to 4.

The Senate stood at ease for lunch, and returned at 1:15 p.m.

Sen. **Thompson** of the 33<sup>rd</sup> moved to reconsider SB 361. Lt. Gov. **Cagle** ruled that the appropriate time for the motion would be tomorrow morning as the first order of business.

The clerk read SB 373, which authorizes the Peace Officer Standards and Training Council to immediately suspend a peace officer in the case of an emergency.

Sen. **Murphy** took the well to present the bill.

SB 373 passed by a vote of 45 to 0.

SB 379 was read, which seeks to reduce the number of telephone solicitation calls to households in the state by regulating the use of automatic dialing services, or “robo-calls.”

President Pro Tempore **Eric Johnson** of the 1<sup>st</sup> took the well to speak to his bill and yielded to questions from Sens. **Smith**, **Steve Henson** of the 41<sup>st</sup> and **Unterman**.

Sen. **Rogers** took the well to speak to his Amendment 1, which allows public and private schools to continue sending automatic notifications to students’ households.

Amendment 1 was unanimously adopted.

The Committee Substitute to SB 379 was adopted unanimously as amended.

SB 379 passed by substitute by a vote of 40 to 9.

The clerk read SB 387, which makes procedural changes to Georgia law governing absentee ballots.

Sen. **Cecil Staton** of the 18<sup>th</sup> took the well to explain the bill. He yielded to questions from Sens. **Fort** and **Johnny Grant** of the 25<sup>th</sup>.

SB 387 passed by a vote of 47 to 3.

The clerk read SB 410, which authorizes the State Road and Tollway Authority to create a state congestion relief fund and allows community improvements districts to receive matching grants.

Sen. **Doug Stoner** of the 6<sup>th</sup> took the well to present the bill and yielded to questions from Sens. **Smith**, **John Douglas** of the 17<sup>th</sup>, **Thompson** of the 33<sup>rd</sup>, **Williams**, **Fort**, **Jeff Mullis** of the 53<sup>rd</sup>, **Balfour** and **Chip Pearson** of the 51<sup>st</sup>.

The Committee Substitute to SB 410 was unanimously adopted.

SB 410 passed by substitute by a vote of 44 to 7.

SB 411 was read, which sets forth the procedures for design-build contracts in the state.

Sen. **Williams** took the well to present the Committee Substitute.

The Committee Substitute to SB 411 was adopted unanimously.

SB 411 passed by substitute by a vote of 49 to 0.

The clerk read SB 429, which expands the responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture's Homeland Security investigators to include the inspection of plants, animals, contaminated foods and other products.

Sen. **Bulloch** took the well to explain the bill.

SB 429 passed by a vote of 49 to 0.

Sen. **Williams** took the well to present SR 981, which sets forth the upcoming schedule of the Senate.

SR 981 was unanimously adopted.

Following further announcements, Majority Leader **Williams** moved that the Senate stand adjourned until 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, February 20.

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